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Some few proposals for the reducing of both the universities.

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Some few Proposals for the reducing of both the Universities, unto their ancient and intended lustre.

By R. W. D. M.

To the Right Honourable the Commons of England Assembled in Parliament.

Right Honourable,

**T**He Authors affection hath eminently appeared in the University for the Parliament, the honour of which he hath sought, as the onely meanes to suppress Tyrannicall government, and to let the Laws runne unbridled with Prerogative; yet oft-times it happens that the best intentions, are not seconded with suitable events. Now being confident that this Parliament intends the Renown of this Commonwealth: It is the humble suit of your well-wisher, That you would begin with the Reformation of the Universities, for in truth the worke is to begin: For that of Cambridge, you did what might be done in a time of War, much could not be expected then: And now to give you your due what was wanting then, you have appointed other Visitors for another regulation; to amend what is amisse or defective, and reform the Reformers. There are a few Rules which if these Visitors should take notice of, would be more Honourable for you, and make the worke more easie for them; both indeed these Rules are nothing but the Laws of our knowing and pious Founders, but now neglected, which were they strictly Reinforced, I am confident would be both to the praise, and to the ample Renown of the Universities, otherwaies the Governors of the Universities my justly be hit in the teeth, with that which \* Aristotle spake of them of the University of Athens, that they found sustenance and Laws, sustenance they made use of, but not the Lawes. Now I conceive that there is no Law in either University, but good use might be made of it, if it were truly observed, not that they are all knowne to me, though I doe confesse I have been sworne to observe the Statutes of both Universities; but this my ignorance is negative, by reason that the University Statntes, especially those of Cambridge, are not obvious nor publick (for herein I may not affirme any thing knowingly of



\* πολλὰς καὶ ἀποειρόμενος Ἀριστοτέλης ἐρασεν, ἵνα δὲ Ἀθηναῖος ἐσθλὸς καὶ πρῶτος, ἀλλὰ πῶς μὲν Χριστοῦ νομοῖς διαμύσσειν. Laertius in

Oxford ejus vita.

(2)  
Oxford in this whole Treatise, in respect I never was a continu-  
there, but all upon supposition) to Cambridge, therefore I shall most  
direct my stile.

The Statutes of this Universitie are, that no English be spoken  
in their Congregations: And in Colledges, the Statutes are, that La-  
tine, Greeke, or Hebrew be spoken within their walls. And prayers  
to begin at five in the morning. The first were it put in practice, would  
take off the obloquy, that the English are able to write Latine, but  
not to speake, which is meenly caused *propter desuetudinem*: And for  
every gowned man to be strictly bound to be at prayers at five in the  
morning, Winter, and Summer, and none to be excepted, but such  
as are super-annuated by the impotency of old yeares, or sicknesse,  
would be a great advancement to learning. And that no Scholler  
upon any occasion, ever to come into Ale-house, Inne, or Taverne,  
though this may seem *dura Lex*, in respect parents may come to see  
their children, to this I answer, what parents are they, that ride ma-  
ny miles to see their sons at the University, would not with rejoyce-  
ment, carry their welcome with them to their sons chambers upon  
such conditions?

The next thing that I would advise is about degrees, That the  
State would pay the Fees for the Commencements that the Officers  
require, for it is fitting, that the Officers should have Fees for their  
examination and attendance. And by this meanes poore men that  
are excellent Schollers, and not able to take degrees, will be prefer-  
red before others lesse deserving, for if it be all one to the Officers,  
then will they not be so ready to speake in the behalfe of able  
Dunces: for in truth I am ashamed to see how many unworthy men  
have proceeded Graduates this way, or by cautioning for their Acts  
and by Mandates from the King, too frequently obtained, which too  
many in these times, have taken occasion to lessen the esteem of the U-  
niversity, which is *magis deus auctoritas* as the Logicians terme it, which  
is a fallacy in the cause. For the University is not to blame, that is, the  
Statutes thereof, but the corruption of those to whom the Statutes  
are entrusted: yet one thing I would advise further, That there might  
be a penall Statute to be thus devised, concerning Degrees (I will  
onely instance in the degree of Doctor) whereby it should be lawfull  
for any man, to call any Doctor before the next Justice of the peace,  
and to command him by vertue of the aforesaid Statute, to translate  
a page in Chrysostome, and a Chapter in the New Testament, if he be a  
Divine,



Divine, if a Physician, then out of Hippocrates and Galen, if a Civil Lawyer, then out of the Novells, a page; which Translation is to be performed in the sight of the Informer, of which there should be two Copies, one the Informer for to have; the other the Justice to send up sealed to certaine Delegates who are to judge of such cases: And in case the Doctor be found worthy, the Informer shall pay 20 l. depofed in the Justice of Peace his hands before he grant his warrant out for the Doctor: the third part of which fumme shall be paid to the Colledge the Doctor was of, because the Colledge usually first pafses their degree; the second to the University; and the other moyety to the Doctor, besides the just charges he hath been put to. Now if the Informer doe conceive he is wronged by the Delegates, it shall be lawfull for him to print the Translation, with the censure of the Delegates, having perfect copies of them, that the Commonwealt seeing their worth, or unworthinesse may so occasionally remove them.

Now if it be so, that the Doctor is judged unworthy, he shall be degraded, and pay the Informers charges, and the University shall pay him 10 l. and the Colledge 10 l. the Doctor was of; so that the Informer shall have 20 l. in case his information prove true, in respect he depofes 20 l. in case he be mistaken. Now I would not have any man thinke, that this triall is worthy of a Doctor, but that it should be rather in Divinity, and in the Sciences, but in the posing of them by the Delegates, there may be such prevarication; and for the Informer himfelfe to put questions to them, either he may not be able, or else his questions may be so unjust, as that although they may be able men, and yet not answer them, and a great deale of cavilling, and endlessse controversie would arise thereby, but herein all men will agree with me, that he is not fit to be a Doctor, that is not *doctus utriusque lingue*, for so every Master of Art is to be by an University Statute; indeed every School boy should be such before he come at the University. Now if the Doctor be found to be such, then would I have the University credited for the rest, besides it is almost impossible, but he should have in some proportion both Humane and Divine learning, with those learned languages. Now I conceive if this were pursued upon Doctors, that shall commence *de futuro*, who should be so obnoxious. The degree of a Doctor would come into esteem againe, nor perhaps would it be so frequent a Title.

Now there are two things which I should propound to be done:  
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